Guru Machideva of Sharana Movement in Karnataka

AI Overview

Madivala Machideva

(also known as Veera Ganachari Madivala Machideva) was a prominent 12th-century saint, warrior, and a key figure in the Sharana movement (Lingayatism). He was a coeval (contemporary) of Guru Basaveshwara and a staunch defender of the faith and its literature. Here are key aspects of his life and role in the movement:

- **Role as a Warrior and Protector:** Machideva is celebrated for his role in protecting the Vachana literature (manuscripts written by Sharanas) during the tumultuous "Kalyana Kranti" (revolution). He fought against communal forces that sought to destroy this literature.
- **Devotion and Philosophy:** He followed the Lingayat dharma taught by Vishwaguru Basavanna and worked to define the daily ethical practices of the faith.
- **Background:** He came from a humble washerman family, symbolizing the dignity of labor, a core principle of the Sharana movement.
- **Significance:** He is revered as an icon of justice, bravery, and unwavering devotion. He is considered one of the leading Shivasharanas who advocated for a caste-free, equitable society.

He is often remembered alongside other 12th-century saints like Allama Prabhu and Akka Mahadevi in the Vachana tradition.

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Guru Machideva's birthday is officially celebrated in Karnataka on February 1st every year.

Guru Machideva (Madivala Machideva): A Saint-Warrior of the Sharana Movement

Guru Machideva, more commonly referred to as Madivala Machideva or Veera Ganachari Madivala Machideva, was a revered 12th-century figure in the Sharana movement, a key part of the Lingayatism (Veerashaivism) tradition in Karnataka, India.

As a contemporary of Basavanna (Basaveshwara), the founder of Lingayatism, he embodied the movement's core ideals of social equality, devotion to Shiva, and rejection of caste hierarchies.

His life as a saint, poet, and warrior exemplifies the Bhakti tradition's emphasis on spiritual purity, ethical conduct, and active resistance against injustice.

Below is a detailed compilation of information about him, structured for easy adaptation into a PDF write-up.

This draws from historical accounts, Vachana literature, and Lingayat traditions.

1. Historical Context: The Sharana Movement

The Sharana movement emerged in the 12th century under Basavanna's leadership in Kalyana (now Basavakalyan, Karnataka).

It was a socio-religious revolution against Brahmanical orthodoxy, caste discrimination, and ritualistic worship.

Sharanas (devotees) like Machideva gathered in the Anubhava Mantapa (Hall of Experience), a democratic assembly where they composed Vachanas—short, profound devotional poems in Kannada that promoted equality, labor dignity (Kayaka), and selfless service (Dasoha).

Machideva was one of over 200 Sharanas, contributing to this egalitarian vision by defending its scriptures and principles during turbulent times.

2. Biography

Birth and Family: Madivala Machideva was born in Devara Hipparagi, a village in the Vijayapura district of Karnataka, to parents Parvatappa (father) and Sujnani (mother).

His exact birth year is not documented, but he lived during the reign of King Bijjala II (1130–1167 CE) of the Kalachuri dynasty.

As a member of the washerman community (Madivala, meaning "washerman" in Kannada), he represented the movement's inclusion of all castes and professions.

Personal Life: He married Mahamane and led a simple life as a washerman in Kalyana.

Despite his humble occupation, he was deeply involved in spiritual and social reforms.

His life reflected the Lingayat principle of "Kayaka Dasoha" (work is worship, and its fruits should be shared).

Role as a Warrior-Saint: During the "Kalyana Kranti" (Kalyana Revolution), a period of upheaval when orthodox forces opposed Basavanna's reforms, Machideva emerged as a fierce protector.

When King Bijjala's army sought to destroy the Vachana manuscripts—sacred texts composed by Sharanas—Machideva fought valiantly to safeguard them.

He transported the manuscripts from Basavakalyan to safer locations, earning him the title "Veera Ganachari" (brave protector).
This act symbolized his commitment to preserving the movement's legacy against communal and royal oppression.

Later Life and Death: Machideva continued to define Lingayat ethics through his teachings and daily practices.

He died in Ulavi Karimana (near Murgod in Belagavi District, Karnataka), a site now revered by devotees.

His life spanned the height of the Sharana movement, and he is remembered as a "freedom fighter" in the context of spiritual and social liberation.

3. Teachings and Philosophy

Machideva's philosophy aligned with Lingayatism's core tenets: monotheism centered on Shiva (as the formless, universal god), rejection of idol worship, and emphasis on personal devotion through the Istalinga (a personal linga worn on the body).

He stressed:

Social Equality and Caste Annihilation: He vehemently opposed caste divisions, arguing that true devotion transcends birth-based hierarchies.

Anyone who receives the Guru's grace and wears the Linga is reborn as equal.

Ethical Conduct (Sadachara): Practices like Dasoha (charitable giving) and avoiding hypocrisy were central.

He warned against betraying the Guru or mixing faiths.

Devotion and Purity: His Vachanas use the metaphor of washing (his profession) to symbolize spiritual cleansing—purifying the body, mind, and soul.

Key Concepts Defined: In his works, he credited Basavanna with innovating Lingayat pillars: Guru (spiritual guide), Linga (symbol of Shiva), Jangama (wandering monk), Prasada (divine grace), and even cosmological ideas like the "seven worlds.

He critiqued "monkey men" (hypocrites) who claim Lingayat identity but revert to worldly deities, emphasizing unwavering faith in Shiva (often addressed as Kudala Sangama Deva or Kalideva).

4. Vachanas (Devotional Poems)

Machideva composed several Vachanas, poetic expressions of devotion and social commentary. Around 100 are attributed to him, though exact numbers vary.

They are simple, rhythmic, and written in everyday Kannada.
Below are a few key examples with Kannada originals and English translations (sourced from Lingayat texts and translations by scholars like O.L. Nagabhushana Swamy and Dr. C.R. Yaravintelimath).

On Caste Annihilation (Vachana 8/493):

Kannada:

ಆ ಜಾತಿ ಈ ಜಾತಿಯವರೆನಬೇಡ. ಹದಿನೆಂಟುಜಾತಿಯೊಳಗಾವ ಜಾತಿಯಾದಡೂ ಆಗಲಿ, ಗುರು ಕಾರುಣ್ಯವ ಪಡೆದು, ಅಂಗದ ಮೇಲೆ ಲಿಂಗವ ಧರಿಸಿ, ಪುನರ್ಜಾತರಾದ ಬಳಿಕ, ಭಕ್ತರಾಗಲಿ ಜಂಗಮವಾಗಲಿ, ಗುರುವಿನ ವೇಷವಿದ್ದವರ ಗುರುವೆಂದು ನಂಬಿ, ದಾಸೋಹವ ಮಾಡುವುದೆ ಸದಾಚಾರ.
ಗುರುವನತಿಗಳೆದು, ಗುರುವಾಜ್ಞೆಯ ಮೀರಿ, ಗುರು ಕೊಟ್ಟ ಪಂಚಮುದ್ರೆಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಅನ್ಯಸಮಯ ಮುದ್ರೆಯ ಲಾಂಛನಾಂಕಿತರಾಗಿ, ಗುರುದ್ರೋಹಿಗಳಾಗಿ ಬಂದವರ ಜಂಗಮವೆಂದು ಕಂಡು, ನಮಸ್ಕರಿಸಿ ಆರಾಧಿಸಿ, ಪ್ರಸಾದವ ಕೊಂಡವಂಗೆ ನಾಯಕನರಕ ತಪ್ಪದೆಂದ ಕಲಿದೇವಯ್ಯ.

English Translation:

Do not talk of this caste or that. Any caste will do, any of the eighteen castes. Once they are reborn by wearing the Linga on their bodies with the blessings of the Guru—whosoever they are, be they Bhaktas or Jangamas—trusting those in Guru's guise and doing Dasoha is Sadachara.
Arch hell awaits him who regards Guru-traitors as Gurus, hails them, worships them, and receives Prasada from them—who, denouncing and defying the Guru, wear the marks of other religions over the Guru-stamped Panchamudras, O Kalidevayya.

On Spiritual Purification (Vachana from Taralabalu collection):

Kannada:

ಎನ್ನ ಕಾಯವ ಶುದ್ಧವ ಮಾಡಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ, ಎನ್ನ ಮನವ ನಿರ್ಮಳವ ಮಾಡಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ, ಎನ್ನಂತರಂಗವ ಬೆಳಗಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ, ಎನ್ನ ಬಹಿರಂಗವ ಬಿಡಿಸಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ. ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ, ಎನ್ನ ನಿಮಗೆ ಯೋಗ್ಯನ ಮಾಡಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ.

English Translation:

Madivala is he who has purified my flesh. Madivala is the one who has made my heart clean. Madivala is the one who has illumined my consciousness.
Madivala is he who has made me forsake the world. Madivala is he who has rendered me fit for thee, O Kudala Sangama Lord.

On Lingayat Identity (Vachana 8/637):

Kannada:

ನಮಗೆ ಲಿಂಗವುಂಟು, ನಾವು ಲಿಂಗವಂತ ರೆಂದು ನುಡಿವರು. ಮತ್ತೆ ಮರಳಿ ಭವಿಶೈವದೈವಂಗಳಿಗೆರಗುವ ಈ ಮಂಗಮಾನವರನೇನೆಂಬೆನಯ್ಯಾ, ಕಲಿದೇವಯ್ಯಾ.

English Translation:

We have Linga, we are called Lingayata. What shall I tell these monkey men who further lean towards worldly Shaiva deities, O Lord Kalideva

Another on Low and High Castes (Vachana 8/568):

Kannada:

ಕೀಳು ಮೇಲಾವುದೆಂದರಿಯದೆ, ಹದಿನೆಂಟು ಜಾತಿಯೆಲ್ಲ ತರ್ಕಕಿಕ್ಕಿ, ಕೂಳ ಸೊಕ್ಕಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಕಣ್ಣಿಗೆ ಕಾಳಗತ್ತಲೆ ಕವಿದು, ಸತ್ಯ ಸದಾಚಾರದ ಹಕ್ಕೆಯನರಿಯದೆ, ಸೂಳೆ ಸುರೆ ಅನ್ಯದೈವದ ಎಂಜಲ ಭುಂಜಿಸುವ ಕೀಳು ಜಾತಿಗಳು, ಶಿವ ನಿಮ್ಮ ನೆನೆವ ಭಕ್ತರುಗಳ ಅನುವನರಿಯದೆ, ಏಳೇಳುಜನ್ಮ ನರಕಕ್ಕೊಳಗಾದರು ನೋಡಾ ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವ.

English Translation:

Not knowing what low caste is and what high caste is, subjecting all the eighteen castes to the rigor of logic; getting their vision blurred by over-eating, not knowing the abode of truth and good conduct, the ‘low castes’ that eat the leftover of prostitutes and other gods, and not knowing the way of your devotees, went to hell in seven lives, look, O Kalidevaradeva!

For more Vachanas, refer to collections like "Vachana" (English translations by O.L. Nagabhushana Swamy) or Basava Samithi's publications.

5. Significance and Legacy

Cultural Impact: Machideva's bravery inspired the Lingayat community, symbolizing resistance against inequality.

He is seen as an incarnation of Veerabhadra or Shiva, particularly among the Madivala (washerman) community.

Modern Tributes: Places in Bengaluru like Madiwala suburb, Madiwala Machideva Road (formerly Old Airport Road), and the Mahasharana Madiwala Machideva Flyover honor him.

A 2016 Kannada film Machideva depicts his life

Jayanti Celebrations: His birthday, Machideva Jayanti, is officially observed on February 1st annually with processions, cultural programs, and discussions on his Vachanas.

Events often occur in Karnataka, including at Kalamandira in Mysore and community halls.

This date aligns perfectly with your plans, as it's just days away from the current time (January 29, 2026).

Machideva's enduring message of unity and devotion continues to inspire, making him a beacon for social reform.

More vachanas with translation:

Here are additional Vachanas attributed to Madivala Machideva (also known as Madivala Machayya or Veera Ganachari Madivala Machideva), with their Kannada originals (where available from sources) and reliable English translations.

These draw from Lingayat collections, including "Vachana" (Basava Samithi edition, translated by O.L. Nagabhushana Swamy) and "Heaven of Equality" (translated by Dr. C.R. Yaravintelimath and Dr. M.M. Kalburgi). Machideva's ankita (signature) is typically Kalidevaradeva or ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವ.

His Vachanas often emphasize spiritual purification (using washing metaphors from his kayaka as a washerman), rejection of caste, unwavering devotion to Shiva/Linga, critique of hypocrisy, and the importance of ethical conduct (sadachara),

Guru loyalty, and liberation from worldly attachments.

On Freedom from Worldly Bonds (Vachana No. 1886, from Basava Samithi collection)

Kannada: (Approximate reconstruction based on translations)

ಆಸೆಯ ಪಾಶದಿಂದ ಹೊರಗಾದರೂ ಕೋಪದ ಪಾಶವ ಬಿಟ್ಟಿಲ್ಲವೆ? ಕೋಪದ ಪಾಶದಿಂದ ಹೊರಗಾದರೂ ಮಾಯೆಯ ಪಾಶವ ಬಿಟ್ಟಿಲ್ಲವೆ? ಲಿಂಗದೊಡನೆ ಒಂದಾಗಿ ಮೂರು ಪಾಶಗಳಿಂದಲೂ ಮುಕ್ತರಾದವರನು ತೋರಿಸು ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವಾ.

English Translation:

What if you are out of the web of desires and you have not given up anger?

What if you are out of the noose of anger and you are still in the web of maya?

Show me those united with Linga

And are out of these three nooses, Kalidevaradeva.

On True Guru-Disciple Relationship (Vachana No. 1893, from Basava Samithi/"VACHANA" edition)

Kannada: (Paraphrased)

ಕಲ್ಲನ್ನು ತಂದು ದೇವರ ಮೂರ್ತಿಯ ಮಾಡಿ ಶಿಲ್ಪಿ ಗುರುವಾದನು, ಕಲ್ಲು ಶಿಷ್ಯನಾದನು. ಗುರುವಿಗೆ ಹಿಂದಿನ ಜ್ಞಾನವಿಲ್ಲ, ಶಿಷ್ಯನಿಗೆ ಮುಂದಿನ ಜ್ಞಾನವಿಲ್ಲ, ಉಪದೇಶ ಹೇಗೆ ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವುದು? ಇಬ್ಬರೂ ಕಲ್ಲು ಮತ್ತು ಶಿಲ್ಪಿಯಂತೆಯೇ ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವಾ.

English Translation:

Bringing a stone and making an idol out of it,
The sculptor became guru, stone became disciple.
Guru who does not know the past or origin
And the disciple who does not know future
And how to receive teachings—
Both are like stone and sculpture, Kalideva.
On Hypocrisy and True Devotion (Another on "monkey men" theme, extension of earlier ones)
Kannada: (From collections)

ಲಿಂಗವುಂಟು ನಾವು ಲಿಂಗವಂತರೆಂದು ನುಡಿವರು, ಮತ್ತೆ ಮರಳಿ ಭವಿಶೈವದೈವಗಳಿಗೆ ಎರಗುವ ಈ ಮಂಗಮಾನವರನೇನೆಂಬೆನಯ್ಯಾ ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವಾ.

English Translation:

We have Linga, we are called Lingayata.
What shall I tell these monkey men
Who further lean towards worldly Shaiva deities, O Lord Kalideva?

On Purification and Fitness for the Divine (From Taralabalu Vachana Samputa collection)

Kannada:

ಎನ್ನ ಕಾಯವ ಶುದ್ಧವ ಮಾಡಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ,
ಎನ್ನ ಮನವ ನಿರ್ಮಳವ ಮಾಡಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ,
ಎನ್ನಂತರಂಗವ ಬೆಳಗಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ,
ಎನ್ನ ಬಹಿರಂಗವ ಬಿಡಿಸಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ.
ಕೂಡಲಸಂಗಮದೇವಾ, ಎನ್ನ ನಿಮಗೆ ಯೋಗ್ಯನ ಮಾಡಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ.

English Translation:

Madivala is he who has purified my flesh.
Madivala is he who has made clean my heart.
Madivala is he who has illumined my consciousness.
Madivala is he who has made me forsake the world.
Madivala is he who has rendered me fit for thee, O Kudala Sangama Lord

On Ethical Conduct and Guru Betrayal (Extension of caste annihilation theme, Vachana 8/493 variant)

Kannada: (Partial)

ಗುರುವನತಿಗಳೆದು, ಗುರುವಾಜ್ಞೆಯ ಮೀರಿ, ಗುರು ಕೊಟ್ಟ ಪಂಚಮುದ್ರೆಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಅನ್ಯಸಮಯ ಮುದ್ರೆಯ ಲಾಂಛನಾಂಕಿತರಾಗಿ…

English Translation:

Arch hell awaits him who regards Guru-traitors as Gurus,
Hails them, worships them, and receives Prasada from them—
Who, denouncing and defying the Guru,
Wear the marks of other religions over the Guru-stamped Panchamudras, O Kalideva!

Machideva is credited with around 300–354 Vachanas in various compilations (e.g., Samagra Vachana Sahitya by Karnataka Government).

For a comprehensive collection, refer to:

"Vachana" (English edition, Basava Samithi, Bengaluru, 2012, translated by O.L. Nagabhushana Swamy)

"Heaven of Equality" (translations by Yaravintelimath and Kalburgi)

Online resources like lingayatreligion.com or vachana.taralabalu.in for more originals and variants.

These Vachanas beautifully capture his washerman kayaka as a metaphor for cleansing the soul.

On themes of kayaka and linga:

Here are more Vachanas from Madivala Machideva specifically focused on the themes of Kayaka (dignified labor/work as worship) and Linga (Istalinga, the personal symbol of Shiva worn on the body, representing direct devotion and unity with the divine).

His kayaka as a washerman (madivala) metaphorically ties into spiritual purification—washing away impurities of the mind and soul—while his emphasis on Linga underscores monotheistic devotion, equality, and rejection of external rituals or idols.

These are drawn from reliable Lingayat sources (e.g., Basava Samithi collections, "Vachana" English translations by O.L. Nagabhushana Swamy, and lingayatreligion.com compilations). Numbers refer to standard Vachana Samputa editions where available.

Vachanas on Kayaka (Work/Labor as Worship)

Machideva viewed kayaka not just as physical toil but as a sacred act that purifies and unites one with Shiva.

His own kayaka of washing clothes of Sharanas symbolized cleansing the community and self.

On Kayaka and Ethical Conduct (Linked to his role in Anubhava Mantapa and refusing lazy/hypocritical people)

Kannada (approximate from traditions):
ಕಾಯಕವಿಲ್ಲದವರ ಬಟ್ಟೆ ತೊಳೆಯೆನು, ದಾಸೋಹಕ್ಕೆ ಅರ್ಹರಲ್ಲದವರಿಗೆ ನೀರು ಸುರಿಯೆನು. ಕಾಯಕವೇ ಪೂಜೆ, ಕಾಯದಿಂದಲೇ ಶಿವನ ಸೇವೆ. ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವಾ.
English Translation (paraphrased from sources):

I will not wash the clothes of those without kayaka—lazy ones who exploit the poor or lack good character.

Work (kayaka) is itself worship; through the body's labor, serve Shiva.

Kayaka builds the Anubhava Mantapa; kingship is not above, nor the lowly below—equality in labor, O Kalidevaradeva.

(**This reflects his strict rule**: only devotees with honest kayaka could approach him, emphasizing dignity of labor and dasoha—sharing fruits of work selflessly.)

Kayaka as Purification (Tied to his washerman metaphor)

Kannada:

ಎನ್ನ ಕಾಯವ ಶುದ್ಧವ ಮಾಡಿದಾತ ಮಡಿವಾಳ... ಕಾಯಕದಿಂದಲೇ ಶುದ್ಧಿ, ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವಾ.

English Translation:

Madivala is he who purifies my body through labor.

Through kayaka, the body becomes clean, the soul illumined—

Work is the path to make one fit for the divine, O Kalidevaradeva.

Vachanas on Linga (Istalinga and Unity with Divine)

Machideva stressed Linga as the core of Lingayatism—worn on the body after Guru's grace, it signifies rebirth, equality, and direct connection to Shiva without intermediaries or temples.

On Unity with Linga (Freedom from Bonds) (Vachana No. 1886)

Kannada:

ಆಸೆಯ ಪಾಶದಿಂದ ಹೊರಗಾದರೂ ಕೋಪದ ಪಾಶವ ಬಿಟ್ಟಿಲ್ಲವೆ? ಕೋಪದ ಪಾಶದಿಂದ ಹೊರಗಾದರೂ ಮಾಯೆಯ ಪಾಶವ ಬಿಟ್ಟಿಲ್ಲವೆ? ಲಿಂಗದೊಡನೆ ಒಂದಾಗಿ ಮೂರು ಪಾಶಗಳಿಂದಲೂ ಮುಕ್ತರಾದವರನು ತೋರಿಸು ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವಾ.

English Translation:

What if you escape the web of desires but cling to anger?
What if you escape anger's noose but remain in maya's trap?
Show me those truly united with Linga, freed from these three bonds, O Kalidevaradeva.

On Wearing Linga and Rebirth/Equality (Extension of caste annihilation, Vachana 8/493 variant)

Kannada:

ಗುರು ಕಾರುಣ್ಯವ ಪಡೆದು, ಅಂಗದ ಮೇಲೆ ಲಿಂಗವ ಧರಿಸಿ, ಪುನರ್ಜಾತರಾದ ಬಳಿಕ... ಭಕ್ತರಾಗಲಿ ಜಂಗಮವಾಗಲಿ…

English Translation:

Receive Guru's grace, wear Linga on the body—
Be reborn equal. Be you Bhakta or Jangama, trust in Guru's guise and practice dasoha as true conduct.
Those who betray Guru and overlay foreign marks on Panchamudras face hell, O Kalideva.

Linga as Supreme, Rejecting Idols (Vachana No. 1899 variant)

Kannada:

ಕೈಯಲಿ ಲಿಂಗವಿಟ್ಟು ಭೂಮಿಯಲಿ ಹುಟ್ಟಿದ ಕಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಅಥವಾ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತ ಲಿಂಗಕ್ಕೆ ನಮಸ್ಕರಿಸುವವರನು ಏನೆಂಬೆ ಕಲಿದೇವರದೇವಾ?

English Translation:

What shall I call those who place Linga in their palm yet bow to stone idols born of earth or installed lingas?

True devotion is to the Linga on the body, not external forms, O Kalidevaradeva.

These highlight how kayaka leads to spiritual fitness for receiving/wearing Linga, creating a cycle of devotion, equality, and service.

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Include info about:

Jayanti Celebrations: "Madivala Machideva Jayanti procession Karnataka" or "Machideva Jayanti photos Bengaluru/Mysore"—shows modern events with portraits, crowds, and cultural programs (e.g., from recent Feb 1 events in Mangaluru or Mysore).

Ulavi Temple/Samadhi Site: "Ulavi Karimana Madivala Machideva" or "Ulavi temple caves Karnataka"—peaceful site of his samadhi for legacy visuals.

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Ref: Google Gemini

Madivala Machideva (popularly known as Guru Machideva) was a towering 12th-century figure in the Sharana movement of Karnataka.

He was not only a mystic poet (Vachanakara) but also a fierce warrior-saint and a close associate of the social reformer Basavanna.

Here is a breakdown of his life, contributions, and the legacy he left behind.

1. Life and Identity

* **Background**: Born in Devara Hipparagi (Vijayapura district), he belonged to the Madivala (washerman/dhobi) community. In the Sharana tradition, he is often revered as an avatar of Veerabhadra.

* **The "Madi" Concept**: His name "Madivala" refers to his profession of washing clothes.

However, in the spiritual context, he was the "washer of souls."

He insisted on Madi (purity), refusing to wash the clothes of those who were morally corrupt or lazy.

* **Veera Ghante**: He was known to carry a bell (Veera Ghante) while walking.

The sound warned people that a "pure soul" was passing, signaling that those who were insincere or "spiritually impure" should move aside so as not to touch the washed clothes of the Sharanas.

2. The Great Warrior-Protector

Machideva is most famous for his role during the Kalyana Kranti (the revolution in Basavakalyan).

* **Preserving Knowledge:** When the Sharanas had to flee following the civil unrest, there was a risk that their sacred writings (Vachanas) would be destroyed by King Bijjala’s army.

* **Valiant Stand**: Machideva led a military defense to protect these manuscripts. It is largely thanks to his bravery that thousands of Vachanas survived and are available to us today.

3. Literary & Spiritual Contributions

Machideva was a prolific Vachanakara. His poems are marked by a tone of uncompromising truth and spiritual authority.

* **Ankitha Nama (Signature):** He wrote his Vachanas under the pen name "Kalidevaradeva."
* **Core Philosophy:** He championed the concept of Kayaka (divine labor) and Dasoha (selfless service).
He argued that no profession is "low" and that purity of mind is more important than birth or caste.

* **Example Vachana Theme**: He often criticized those who wore the external symbols of religion (like the Linga) but harbored ego or practiced caste discrimination.

Key Facts at a Glance

Aspect	Details
Title	Veera Ganachari Madivala Machideva
Contemporary	Basavanna, Allama Prabhu, Akka Mahadevi
Major Feat	Safeguarding Vachana literature from the army of King Bijjala
Place of Death	Ulavi (near Belagavi district)
Commemoration	**Machideva Jayanti** is celebrated officially by the Government of Karnataka.

Some of his most famous vachanas:

Madivala Machideva was more than just a saint; he was the spiritual and physical protector of the Sharana movement.

His Vachanas and his role in the "Kalyana Kranti" are the stuff of legends.

1. Vachanas of Madivala Machideva

His Vachanas often focus on the theme of purity—not just of clothes, but of the soul. He uses sharp, direct language to challenge hypocrisy and caste discrimination.

His signature (Ankitha Nama) is "Kalidevaradeva."

On True Purity and Caste

> "Do not talk of this caste or that.
> Any caste will do... Once they are reborn by wearing the Linga on their bodies.
> Whosoever they are, be they Bhaktas, be they Jangamas,

> ...Archaic hell awaits him, who regards the Guru-traitors as Gurus."
>
The Meaning: Machideva argues that birth and social status are irrelevant. The moment a person adopts a life of devotion and discipline, their past "caste" is washed away. To judge someone by their birth after they have chosen a spiritual path is, to him, a great sin.

On the Human Body

> "A cocoon of insects, a reservoir of blood,
> A leather coat for flesh and a gauge of hair follicles;
> A rope of nerves and muscles...
> O fool, tell us which is your caste and creed among these?"
>
The Meaning: He uses raw, biological imagery to remind us that underneath our skin, every human is made of the same "filth" and "frailty."

Since our physical bodies are identical, claiming superiority based on "caste" is a delusion of the ego.

2. The Battle of Kalyana Kranti

The Kalyana Kranti (Kalyana Revolution) of the 12th century was a pivotal moment in Indian history.

It wasn't just a religious shift; it was a radical social uprising against the rigid caste system.

* **The Trigger**: The revolution reached a breaking point when a "socially impossible" marriage was performed between the son of a cobbler (Haralayya) and the daughter of a Brahmin minister (Madhuvarasa). This defiance of caste laws enraged the orthodox society and King Bijjala.

* **The Violence**: The king ordered the execution of the fathers involved. This led to widespread unrest, the assassination of King Bijjala, and a brutal crackdown by the state army against the Sharanas.

* **Machideva's Heroism**: As the army descended upon Basavakalyan, their goal was to wipe out the Sharanas and destroy the Vachanas (written on palm leaves), which they saw as dangerous, revolutionary documents.

* **The Guard of Honor**: Madivala Machideva took up arms. Leading a group of warrior-saints, he fought a rearguard action to protect the manuscripts. He transported the Vachanas safely from Basavakalyan toward Ulavi.

* **The Legacy**: It is said that without Machideva’s martial skill and bravery, the philosophy of Basavanna would have been burned to ashes. He essentially "saved" the literature that defines the Lingayat faith today.

Comparison of Roles in the Revolution

Figure	Role in the Revolution
Basavanna	The Visionary & Social Architect
Allama Prabhu	The Spiritual Philosopher
Madivala Machideva	The Warrior-Protector & Moral Enforcer
Akka Mahadevi	The Radical Mystic

About his final journey to Ulavi and the Kayaka philosophy:

To understand Madivala Machideva fully, you have to see him as a man who lived a "total life"—where physical labor (Kayaka) and the ultimate sacrifice for his community were two sides of the same coin.

1. The Philosophy of Kayaka (Divine Labor)

In the 12th century, "work" was often dictated by birth. Machideva and Basavanna flipped this on its head with the slogan: "Kayakave Kailasa" (Work is Heaven).

For Machideva, Kayaka was not just a job; it was a spiritual discipline.

* **Dignity of Labor:** He continued his work as a washerman even as he became a respected leader.

He taught that no work is "dirty" except for work done with an impure heart.

* **The Filter of Madi**: He was famous for refusing to wash the clothes of the wealthy or the "upper" castes if they were greedy or cruel.

He believed that the dirt on the clothes of a corrupt person would "stain" his own soul.

* **Financial Independence**: He insisted that every seeker must earn their own bread.

This removed the "priestly class" dependency, making every individual responsible for their own salvation through honest work.

> **Key Quote**: "One who performs Kayaka with a pure heart, for them, the Lord Kalidevaradeva resides in the very sweat of their brow."
>

2. The Final Journey to Ulavi

After the chaos of the Kalyana Kranti, the Sharanas were scattered.

Machideva took on the most dangerous task: leading a massive group of Sharanas (including Channabasavanna) and the "Vachana bundles" to safety.

* **The Great Migration**: They traveled through the dense, hilly forests of the Western Ghats to escape the pursuing cavalry of the Kalachuri kingdom.

* **The Defense at Kakkeri**: History records a fierce battle at a place called Kakkeri.

Machideva and his warrior-saints stood their ground against the state army to allow the palm-leaf manuscripts to be carried further into the jungle.

* **Arrival in Ulavi**: They eventually reached Ulavi (in present-day Uttara Kannada), a remote and rugged terrain that acted as a natural fortress.

* **Final Rest**: Machideva spent his final days in Ulavi, ensuring the Vachana literature was organized and hidden for future generations.

He eventually attained Sthala (passed away) there.

Today, the Ulavi Channabasaveshwara Temple and the surrounding caves remain a major pilgrimage site where Machideva is honored.

The Legacy of the "Vachana Bundles"

It is estimated that thousands of Vachanas were lost in the fires of the revolution.

However, the thousands that we do have today—the poems of Basavanna, Akka Mahadevi, and Allama Prabhu—exist specifically because Machideva carried them on his back and defended them with his sword.

Summary Table: The Dual Nature of Machideva

The Saint (Vachanakara)	The Soldier (Ganachari)
Wrote poetry under "Kalidevaradeva."	Led the defense of the Sharanas.
Purified souls through spiritual discourse.	Protected the physical body of the movement.
Championed the dignity of the washerman.	Fought the cavalry of King Bijjala.
Focused on inner "Madi" (Purity).	Preserved the written "Vachana" heritage.

His Jayanti celebrations

Madivala Machideva Jayanti is a significant cultural and religious event in Karnataka, celebrated with deep reverence not only by the Madivala community but by all followers of the Sharana movement.

Since the Government of Karnataka officially recognized this day, it has grown from a community ritual into a state-level celebration of social justice and equality.

1. When is it celebrated?

* **The Date**: It is traditionally celebrated on February 1st every year.

* **Government Status**: It is an official celebration organized by the Department of Kannada and Culture. While not always a general public holiday,

it is observed in all government offices and schools with formal programs.

2. Key Rituals and Traditions

The celebrations are a mix of spiritual reflection and vibrant street festivities:

* **The Procession (Shobha Yatre):** This is the highlight of the day.

A decorated portrait or idol of Machideva—often shown with his trademark bell and warrior attire—is carried through the main streets of cities like Mysuru, Hubballi, and Bengaluru.

* **Cultural Troupes**: The procession is accompanied by traditional folk performances such as:

  * **Veeragase**: A high-energy dance representing the bravery of Lord Veerabhadra.

  * **Dollu Kunitha:** Rhythmic drum dances.

  * **Kamsale**: Brass-clashing folk art that adds a spiritual rhythm to the event.

* **Vachana Recitation**: In various Mathas (monasteries) and community halls, scholars and devotees gather to sing and interpret Machideva's Vachanas.

This ensures his philosophy of "Kayaka" (work) and "Madi" (purity) is passed to the next generation.

* **Floral Tributes**: Government officials, including MLAs and Ministers, often lead the event by offering floral tributes to Machideva's statue or portrait at district headquarters.

3. The Core Message of the Celebrations

During the Jayanti, speakers and community leaders focus on a famous phrase attributed to Machideva:

> "**Arasutana melalla, Agasatana keellalla."**
> (Kingship is not superior, and being a washerman is not inferior.)
>

The day serves as a reminder that dignity of labor is the foundation of a healthy society. It is also a day where the "washerman" community is honored for its historical role as the protectors of Vachana literature.

Celebration Locations of Note

* **Devara Hipparagi**: His birthplace in Vijayapura district, which becomes a major hub of pilgrimage.
* **Ulavi**: The site of his final rest, where thousands of devotees gather to offer special prayers.
* **Bengaluru**: The city has a major flyover and a road (Old Airport Road) named after him, which are often decorated during the Jayanti.Jayanti celebrations

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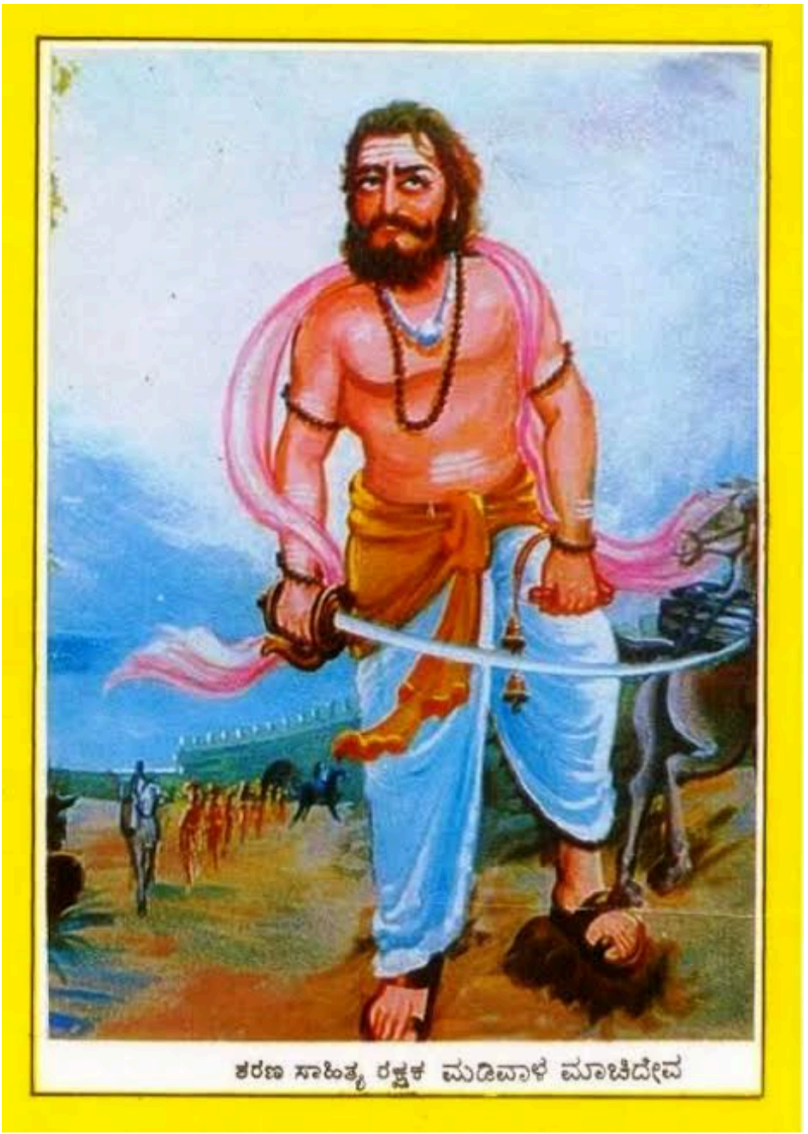
Photos



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Videos

Sharana darshana - Madivala Machideva (12 min):

https://youtu.be/0S6umJldAOA?si=ag9us8ZhUkx-nxxB

Pravachana (19 min):
https://youtu.be/Y10QBbn5BzM?si=qBo7Er720WHT1otI

Sri Basava TV - Pravachana (22 min):

https://youtu.be/q9m0vv9F0BA?si=fEnK9oFFYXcqeqov

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Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar
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